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AUTHOR King, David C.
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ABSTRACT

Ideas are outlined for teaching about the universal concept of conflict in grades kindergarten through six. This guide has been prepared to help elementary teachers incorporate concept learning about conflict into any social studies/social science class, no matter what texts or programs are being followed. Major objectives are to help students develop an understanding of conflict as a natural force; ability to see similarities in dynamics of conflict at all social levels--personal, community, and global; and acceptance of the idea that conflict can be either harmful or beneficial. The guide is divided into two sections: suggestions for curriculum development concerning conflict in grades K-3 and grades 4-6. Objectives at the primary level stress identification of conflict and relationships between conflict and change. Students in grades K-3 discuss hypothetical situations based on class readings, compare animal families to human families, and analyze plant and animal needs in a small garden setting. Students in grades 4-6 study other cultures, American history, and the environment to analyze the role of conflict in ethnic stereotyping and in urban industrial growth which affects natural resources and wildlife. (AV)

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Global Perspectives:
A Humanistic Influence
on the Curriculum

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CONFLICT

Number Two in a Series of K-12 Guides

Part A, K-3 **Part B, 4-6**

CENTER FOR GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES **DAVID C. KING**

A SPECIAL NOTE: The concept guides and patterns for teaching should be viewed as a stage in a process, rather than volumes with any pretense of finality. Your comments and suggestions for building and reshaping the conceptual framework and sample lessons are welcomed and needed. It is anticipated that the framework will be adapted by each user, as it functions to complement and supplement a wide variety of disciplines and courses. Further, we welcome the comments of students, parents, and administrators, as well as teachers and curriculum specialists.

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CENTER FOR GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

National Office: 218 East 18th Street, New York, NY 10003
West Coast: Hotel Claremont Office Park, Suite 235, Oakland/Berkeley, CA 94705

CENTER FOR TEACHING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80210

CONNECTICUT PROJECT FOR GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES
218 East 18th Street, New York, NY 10003

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES:

A HUMANISTIC INFLUENCE ON THE CURRICULUM

SUGGESTIONS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT ON CONFLICT

PART A, K-3 PART B, 4-6

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES:

A HUMANISTIC INFLUENCE ON THE CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

> The most reliable starting point in learning is usually with the whole, leaving parts to be examined in the perspective of the whole. . . . We learn to find our way about a town by looking at a map of the whole and finding where we are in relation to the whole. We find our way in and out of complex buildings by having an image or map of the whole, and our present position in relation to it -- or follow notices provided by someone who has such an image. A knowledge of world society as a whole helps us to understand parts of it, and to see the relationships between the parts. Without this knowledge we are likely to misinterpret behavior, to attribute wrong motivations, to mistake individual differences for racial or cultural differences and generally to be inadequate within our own social relationships.
>
> *John W. Burton, World Society, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 6*

* * * *

The basic idea of this series, GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES: A HUMANISTIC INFLUENCE ON THE CURRICULUM, is to suggest some important ways in which teachers and curriculum developers can weave a broader and more realistic world view into the existing social studies curriculum, K-12. The goal is neither to remodel present courses nor to create new ones. Much of the educational raw material needed for an adequate understanding of our world already exists, at least in the more up-to-date texts and supplementary units. What is lacking are tools students can use to organize more effectively the mass of information. As matters now stand, the students encounter the material, grade after grade after grade, but they fail to emerge with the world-mindedness so vital to people who will be spending their adult lives in the 21st century.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONCEPTS/THE IDEA OF UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS

One basic set of tools students need are concepts that will give them a chance to organize and process the increasing mountains of information which confront them. This includes the bombardment of data and stimuli from all sources -- not just the classroom. For a long time educators have been convinced that learning can best be organized around various centralizing themes or concepts.

To achieve this end, lists of concepts were gleaned from each of the social sciences. And the lists have grown; the teacher's edition of practically every text at every grade level is loaded with concepts. Many of these organizing labels are appropriate for exploring limited subject matter and gaining some small insight. For instance, once a student has grasped the concept of *irrigation*, it is easily applied -- at least to certain phenomena. The concept may not need to be taught in later grades.

But notice this: a few of the words in those growing lists are of a different order. *Interdependence* and *conflict*, for example, are included in most collections of concepts. Those two words suggest something larger, more vital than *sea transportation, buying and selling* or *political parties*. They are larger organizing themes; they represent forces that pervade our lives. Understanding of conflict and interdependence is important to understanding ourselves and the world around us.

To separate these larger themes from the extensive listings, we can call them *universal concepts*. They cut across disciplinary lines -- each of the social sciences can shed some light on them. In fact, they go beyond the social sciences -- other areas of exploration, such as literature, art, science -- can offer valuable perspectives. These universal concepts also cut across longitudinal lines; that is, they should be dealt with at each grade level as a vital part of the learning process.

This idea of universal concepts can provide us with the kind of organizing themes we need. These over-arching concepts should be thought of as ways of looking at the world, lenses for seeing things from a certain perspective. They become analytical tools for pulling together seemingly diverse phenomena; students can apply them to their own lives and surroundings as well as to a variety of course materials.

Clearly if universal concepts are to have any value, there needs to be a sequence of development. As the child matures, he or she should be learning to apply a number of these lenses in an

increasingly sophisticated manner. And even in the very early grades, the child should be able to explore how these concepts operate on the global level as well as in his or her personal life and surroundings. This does not mean that every class period should be devoted to concentration on one universal concept or another. Rather, the idea is that working with subject matter in a certain way at various times during the year will lead students to incorporate these perspectives into their thinking.

USING THE GUIDES

The major portion of each guide consists of topics, ideas, and questions which the teacher can insert into the curriculum at appropriate places. The guide may look complicated, but the outline of suggestions for specific grade levels is actually quite manageable. We have tried to gear the K-9 outlines to existing texts, so there is rarely a need to develop new lessons or to buy new materials. The teacher will find, by simply reading through the guide, that there are numerous places to use the concept for two key purposes:

a. To help the student better understand the subject matter;

b. To provide ways of seeing the relationship between the course material and one's own life -- relating self and subject matter to encompass a world view.

For those developing new curriculum materials, the guides offer suggestions on how to tailor subject matter so that it will better meet the needs of young people growing up in this closed system we have come to refer to as Spaceship Earth. We hope, too, that commercial publishers will find some ideas and viewpoints worth considering in the development of future series.

The guide has a valuable supplement, which offers some sample lessons at various grade levels. It also gives some ideas on how teachers can create their own lessons, relying primarily on the daily newspaper and local events.

CONFLICT IN THE K-12 CURRICULUM

Conflict is a major force in nature and in people's lives. It has been part of the development of all past human societies. Indeed, we cannot conceive of any form of society, past or future, in which there will not be conflict. As we begin to know more about what it is and how it works, we improve our chances of coping with it more effectively. At the same time we come to understand ourselves better and see the world around us more clearly.

Of course, young people do learn about conflict -- they encounter it dozens of times every day. But the knowledge gained is far from systematic; it is as likely to be misinformation as it is to be valid enough to serve as guidelines for decisions. In our schools, we tend to gloss over the subject, treating it as something unpleasant that should be handled as delicately as possible. A Stanford University group studied the way in which conflict was presented in social studies texts at the third and ninth grade levels. Their report stated that: "Not only are few problems presented: those that do exist are depicted as not severe. The majority of the examples of conflict in the books we analyzed, regardless of what issue was involved, tended to be presented either as neutral (24%) or as being carried out in a spirit of cooperation (71%)."

Children are also exposed to conflict on television, and here they encounter the idea that conflict is usually violent and resolved by violence. Adult programming is often criticized for its penchant for violence; children's programs are statistically six times as violent. The average child witnesses an estimated 18,000 TV deaths a year! (Statistics from a special news report, KPIX-TV, San Francisco, May 10-12, 1975.)

Clearly we must correct these distortions, and begin to deal with conflict in a more realistic way. Conflict is limited neither to friendly disagreements nor to murder and mayhem. One major objective should be to help students gain a healthy attitude toward conflict. This involves recognizing that conflict is a basic part of everyone's life. Rather than being an inescapable evil, it often serves positive functions. For example, conflicts over ideas of government contributed not only to American independence (through violence) but to the creation of a superb constitution (without violence). Without the need to work out conflicts, these things would not have happened. The Constitution itself is a master plan for expressing, regulating, and resolving conflicts.

By working through conflicts in a wide variety of settings, students will come to understand that:

- avoiding conflict is not necessarily a good way to deal with it;

- the belief that if everyone obeys the rules there will be no conflict is an oversimplification;

- there are many ways to express and resolve conflict; the socially accepted ways of resolving conflict are usually more successful than unaccepted ways;

- conflict is often *not* a win-lose situation; both sides can gain (or lose) some things.

To achieve such objectives, you will sometimes have to counterbalance text generalizations -- particularly those generalizations based on the assumption that conflict is unpleasant and to be avoided. Some examples:

- if everyone obeys the rules, conflicts will go away;

- conflict is a sort of necessary evil; cooperation, the opposite of conflict, makes everyone feel better.

Texts do deal with expressions of anger, but it is also important to see other kinds of conflict -- the opposition of ideas, the working out of differences, and finding solutions to problems.

A more open and sensible approach to the subject can serve a number of important goals. Understanding conflict:

- develops a more realistic self-awareness;

- contributes to knowledge of one's role as a group member and as a member of society;

- becomes a link for seeing relationships among a number of subject areas, especially literature, social studies, science and art;

- can be used as a lens for seeing more clearly the world around us -- the natural environment, the local community, the global setting.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES IN TEACHING ABOUT CONFLICT, K-12

1. To develop students' understanding and acceptance of conflict as a natural and normal force in our lives.

2. To recognize that irrational conflict or violent conflict tends to be more destructive than conflict dealt with in socially accepted and non-violent ways.

3. To be able to see similarities in the dynamics of conflict at all social levels -- personal, group, community, nation, world community.

4. To explore a wide variety of ways to express conflicts and to resolve them.

5. To accept the idea that conflict can be either harmful or beneficial (dysfunctional or functional).

6. To develop some of the tools needed to cope more successfully with a world characterized by constant and increasing conflict.

SOME KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. You do not have to deal with conflict -- or any other universal concept -- every single class period.

2. You should mention the label as infrequently as possible -- hearing the words too often can have a negative effect.

3. Use the guide to find topics which lend themselves most readily to teaching a particular concept. This will help you avoid bending the subject matter to fit a concept. It will also reduce preparation time and the need for outside materials.

4. Draw on other areas of experience as much as possible -- life experiences, well-known news events, television programming, things that are going on in the students' other subjects, especially language arts and sciences.

5. While an important goal of these guides is to develop a better sense of the total world environment, you will find that much of the learning focuses on the concept without trying to stretch it to global implications. This approach is important: if concept learning is to work, the students must gain experience in as many different settings as possible -- including their personal lives and their immediate surroundings as well as national and worldwide concerns.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

CONFLICT

PRIMARY GRADES (K-3)

OBJECTIVES

Students should

1. begin seeing how conflict operates in a number of settings, including:

   - the students' own lives
   - nature
   - families
   - communities

2. be able to pick out examples of conflict, identify the central problem, and examine different resolutions.

3. recognize a relationship between conflict and change.

4. know that rules provide us with the means of expressing conflicts and resolving them.

5. begin to see that some conflicts involve all people of the world.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

Primary level texts show steady improvement in their treatment of conflict, although they still contain too many dangerous over-simplifications and unrealistic solutions. Examples:

- "People do not want to live in a city with conflicts."

- "Carl won the fight easily. He used new ways of fighting his father had taught him."

The purpose of this outline is to suggest some places in the curriculum where you can easily deal with conflict more openly and directly. This can contribute to a healthier understanding of the

subject. At the same time, the students will be acquiring facility in the use of an important analytical tool, concepts. Remember that this does not mean that you have to deal with the subject or the word so often that children lose interest. A balance is needed. This guide will enable you to identify topics that fit most comfortably with your subject matter and teaching practices.

TOPIC AND IDEA OUTLINE

INTRODUCTORY -- Beginning to talk about conflict

(This can be used at any grade level.)

1. A good way to begin dealing directly with the subject is to use a Reader and play a simple game of *what if*.

   a. Read any story or poem that involves a conflict or dispute -- easy enough to find.

   b. Ask "what if" and present the children with a change in the situation. For example, in the story of "the Lion and the Mouse," what if the mouse only managed to make the thorn worse?

   c. Present more *what if's* -- from stories or imagination. Examples:

      - What if you were a squirrel and winter was coming?

      - What if another person had a toy you wanted?

      - What if you didn't have enough money for an ice cream cone?

   d. Let the children imagine different conclusions. These can be realistic or fanciful. The main point is for them to see a range of possible choices, some clearly better than others.

   e. Ask which endings the children like and why; which endings might make things worse?

f. The class should be able to achieve these understandings:

- *When people have a problem* (a better word at this point than conflict), *they try to do something about it.*
- *Some things will solve the conflict.*
- *Some things could make it worse.*

2. *Identifying conflicts:* it is important for children to gain practice identifying different kinds of conflicts and the actors involved.

a. Stories in Readers, or more *what ifs*, can be used. Ask the class:

- Who has a problem?
- What is the problem about?
- How does it end?
- Can anyone think of better endings?

b. You can pursue the idea of possible endings by asking "and then what would happen" (a questioning technique employed in the Taba series). This encourages children to think about the consequences of actions.

STUDYING FAMILIES AND GROUPS

You can use lessons on being members of families or groups for valuable learning about conflict. The major objectives would be:

Students will

- begin to accept the idea that conflict is natural; everyone has conflicts.
- identify several different ways of settling conflicts.
- know that rules help us deal with problems.

- recognize that some problems end up making things better.

1. Talking about feelings of anger.

   a. Most social studies texts offer examples of an individual facing a conflict -- within the family, over possessions, or over a situation like moving to a new neighborhood. It is useful to talk about the feelings involved; help the class avoid the conclusion that feelings of anger are in themselves wrong. It is what we do with those feelings that matters. Some questions to talk about:

      - Do you find that you sometimes get angry and can't help it?

      - Is this like _____ (the person in the text or Reader)?

      - Would it be good to throw something at the other person, or to sock that person?

      - What other things could you do?

      - What endings does the class like best?

   Use the text situation to lead to the following activity:

   b. Create a mural or picture study of conflict.

      (1) Collect and display a variety of pictures showing different kinds of conflict -- arguing, fighting, scolding, stealing, etc. (*The World of Mankind* in the Follett Series has a good picture selection.)

      (2) Ask the class to identify pictures that show anger.

      (3) Do all the pictures show people having problems?

      (4) What could be done in each situation? How does the problem end? (By second grade, the class should be given the word *conflict* as a term to describe all these different arguments and problems.

      (5) Use the children's suggested endings to make a chart: *Ways of Settling Conflicts*. With help, the class should be able to list such possibilities as:

- fighting
- trading
- obeying rules
- going home
- asking parents
- crying

(6) In a reading period, talk about some of the conflicts they have read about in stories. What different ways of settling conflicts were used? Does the class think the chosen solution was a good one? Would another way be better? The chart could then be made more elaborate, worked on in small groups or as a class for as long a period as you find valuable. Headings would be:

Person	*Conflict or Problem*	*Ending or Way of Settling*	*Any Better Ending?*

2. Explore *the reasons for rules*: Social Studies texts often create the mistaken impression that if rules are obeyed there is no conflict. It is more realistic for children to understand that *rules offer good ways for settling conflicts* -- rather than making conflict disappear.

   a. Introductory activity -- Have the class try to plan something without your help, like a picnic, field trip, or fantasy journey to the moon. Chances are they can't do it without first establishing rules. Notice that once there are rules, conflicts still come up over when to go, who is in charge, and so on. The rules give us a way of settling these conflicts.

   b. Kinds of rules -- Use pictures to make bulletin board displays of the kinds of rules we have and why we have them. This could include:

Rules	*What kind (examples)?*	*Why we have them?*
Family rules		
Safety rules		
Classroom rules		
Playing rules		

c. Text or stories can provide examples of how rules work:

- Who has the problem?
- What is the problem about?
- How do rules help settle it?

3. *Can conflicts be good?* -- When you encounter a situation or story that fits, you can introduce the idea that conflicts can sometimes make things better.

a. Choose situations where conflict (or a problem) leads a person to learn something, appreciate others, establish rules, or cooperate. Examples:

- Conflict over a toy or pet might lead to sharing.
- Moving to a new neighborhood often involves conflict at first, but then leads to new friends, etc.
- Getting lost can lead to a new appreciation of rules.

b. Use classroom experiences wherever possible -- perhaps a problem that led to a new rule which has made the room better.

4. Explore *conflicts in other settings*: The variety will provide more examples and reinforces the understanding that everyone has conflicts.

a. *Television families* are good for viewer identification and provide a non-threatening way of thinking about families and small groups. Choose one or two favorite programs and have the class answer these questions:

- *Who* is having the problem?
- *What* is it about?
- *How* do you think you would feel if you were on either side?
- *How* does it end? Or alternatively, how *might* it end?

b. *Role-playing television families* (and other kinds of families) can be most useful for examining feelings, judging consequences of actions, exploring ways of settling differences.

c. *Families in other places* encountered in text or Readers. Studies of other cultures help students see similarities and differences in how families are organized, what activities they engage in, what kinds of rule people have, and so on. Some conflict situations may be encountered -- these can be used to draw out similarities and differences when compared to the students' experiences. This, too, reinforces the universal nature of the theme.

d. *Animal families* provide insights.

(1) Stories, films and television programs can provide case studies of different kinds of conflicts, different ways of settling them.

(2) A field trip to a zoo, or a show-and-tell by someone who has new-born pets, offers a chance to talk about the kinds of problems real-life animals face.

- Can the class tell what kinds of conflict animals might have?

- How do parents show their young what to do or what not to do?

- Do animal families ever behave like human families? (anger, scolding)

e. *Fantasy families* -- The world of fantasy, of course, is important to children and it is often unwise and impractical to try to puncture dreams with reality. Many children will like to talk about some of the magical ways of resolving problems. This is healthy as long as real-life conflicts are not dealt with in the same way.

LEARNING ABOUT NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

(Usually grades 2 and 3)

Neighborhoods and communities are usually covered at considerable length in social studies texts. In addition to your other learning objectives, look for situations that can contribute to greater understanding of conflict. Three or four lessons will contribute to such performance objectives as:

Students will

- recognize that conflict exists in neighborhoods and communities, much as it does in families and groups.
- be able to identify specific kinds of conflicts and ways of resolving them.
- know that conflict arises over people's needs and wants.
- understand that rules and government provide ways of managing (dealing with) conflict.
- begin to see that conflict can lead to change; and change can lead to conflict.

1. *Ways of working*: Jobs and different kinds of work reveal the webs of mutual dependence within communities. You will also find examples of conflict. Relating to factories and jobs, the following questions might be explored:

   a. Why is the factory important to workers? How is it important to others in the community? What problems might the factory cause for the community? (getting to and from work, pollution) How can the problems be solved? Is this like any other problems the class has talked about?

   b. Why do people need jobs? What happens if you lose a job? How do people find out about new places to work?

2. *Conflict and change*: Your text should have examples of how change can contribute to conflict.

   a. An example: In *People in Neighborhoods* (Taba Series), a city needs a new airport -- or a larger one. What changes

will this bring about? Who would want each change? The class then works through a Town Council Meeting as a way of settling the issue.

b. Another example: In *The Third Planet* (Macmillan Series), the issue of air pollution in Los Angeles can be used to get at such questions as: What changes created the problem? What changes also caused problems with land and water? How did people try to solve these problems? Did these things lead to new kinds of conflict? (conflicts over growth, mass transit, anti-pollution laws) Why is there conflict over ways to protect the environment? (different needs, such as jobs; different ideas about what would be best)

3. *Making rules in the community*: Texts vary in the kinds of community conflicts they present -- race relations, poverty, renewal, planning, environmental protection, and so on. Any of these are excellent for showing how government and laws offer ways of dealing with community conflicts.

   a. The class can learn about -- or simulate -- a variety of ways of settling conflicts:

      - meetings
      - votes
      - elections
      - petitions
      - new rules

      (1) Use specific examples whenever possible -- a problem with pollution, perhaps, or racial prejudice blocking people from voting or better homes.

      (2) As with previous experiences, it is helpful to identify

         - who is having the conflict.
         - what it is about,
         - how are people trying to solve it.
         - what other things could be tried.

b. Rules and government also illustrate the value of ***compromise*** in settling many conflicts.

(1) Discuss a specific situation and ask:

- What would happen if each side insisted on having its own way?
- Did both sides have to give in a little?
- Can you tell about any conflicts that were settled by both sides giving in?

(2) An example: In *One Plus One* (Macmillan Series), a community conflict is concluded by establishing a new rule, a compromise. The text concludes with a person saying: "I guess we have to give up being free one way to be free another way."

c. In studying either communities or nature, extend the children's awareness to the need for resolving conflicts within the global community. See next section.

CONFLICT OVER BASIC NEEDS: STUDYING HUMANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

(Particularly suitable for science classes, levels 2 and 3)

Beginning studies of nature are important for two key concepts: interdependence and conflict. Learning about both should be a major goal of some of your science lessons. Most texts now approach the natural environment from the point of view of interlocking *systems* -- a major aspect of interdependence. In general, conflict can be seen as a way in which nature acts to balance those systems. Analyzing conflict in nature will help children accept it as a natural and important aspect of life. Applying the concept to science lessons will contribute to these objectives:

Students will

- know that conflict exists in the world of plants and animals.
- recognize that these conflicts are part of the balance in nature.

- identify basic needs over which living things compete.

- understand that humans must be cautious in using their power over nature.

- know that animals, like humans, often work together in meeting basic needs.

- begin to sense that some conflicts involve the entire global community.

1. How do plants and animals meet their basic needs?

   a. Pets -- real or story-book -- offer a good way to talk about what living things need. What does a pet need to stay alive? A basic list of needs includes:

      - food
      - air
      - space
      - warmth

   b. For some pets, an owner or keeper has become part of the "habitat." Suppose the pet were living in the wild. Invite guesses about:

      (1) What problems the pet might have with other animals over each basic need.

      (2) How other animals or plants might help. Use this as a lead-in to learning about kinds of conflict in the world of plants and animals.

2. Studying plants: why is there conflict over basic needs?

   a. Use a text experiment for growing bean or pea plants.

      (1) Make notes of what happens if there is overcrowding, too much or too little water, too much or too little sun.

      (2) Children can make guesses about whether or not plants can have conflicts with other plants. Explore their hypotheses in the following activity.

b. Pea plants -- an example of conflict over basic needs.*

(1) Count the pods and peas in a single mature plant. How many possible pea plants are there?

(2) If each pea became a plant with that many more possible plants, what could happen?

(3) Why isn't the whole state or all of North America covered with pea plants? How would life be different if the world had no plants but peas?

(4) The children will easily grasp the idea that not all of the peas survive. The same is true of all populations. (Many teachers use this kind of activity to deal with the causes of death.)

(5) List some of the reasons why all the possible pea plants do not survive. (Some are eaten by humans or other animals; some are crowded out by other plants; some will not get enough water, etc.)

(6) Develop conclusion -- *the conflict over basic needs is nature's way of balancing systems.*

(7) You can carry this idea further -- and include animal life -- through the study of conflict in a terrarium. See Exemplary Lessons, Primary Grades.

3. Humans and the natural world.

a. *What conflicts do people have with plants and animals over basic needs?*

(1) Study a garden for observations. What plants give us trouble? (weeds, mold) What animals give us trouble? (pests)

(2) Compare a modern garden with ways Indians or early people got food. What problems did they have with

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* For an expanded version of this activity see the Houghton Mifflin Level 3 text, *Modular Activities Program in Sciences*, 1974, pp. 190-191.

plants or animals? How did they resolve those conflicts? Are any of those ways like our ways today?

(3) Read the story of Peter Rabbit. What kind of conflicts can the class find? Who is the pest from Peter's point of view?

b. *What actions by humans harm systems in nature?*

(1) This, of course, is a basic idea of lessons dealing with misuse or pollution of the environment.

(2) Use such lessons to develop two important ideas:

(a) Humans have the means to "win" many of their conflicts with nature.

(b) We have to be careful how we use this power.

(3) Specific kinds of pollution or damage to systems can be drawn from your text materials.

(4) Lessons on endangered species would be good here. You might compare the reasons some species today are becoming extinct with the reasons for the disappearance of earlier species, like the dinosaurs.

4. Conflict and cooperation.

a. To avoid the conclusion that nature illustrates nothing but conflict, observe cases of cooperation as well -- an animal family -- an ant or bee colony.

b. Questions to consider:

(1) How do the animals help each other?

(2) Do they get enough food and water?

(3) What are examples of how people work together to meet basic needs? (Some people grow food, others supply goods or services, families work together, etc.)

c. Find stories that show realistic cooperation between different animal species. Example: "Bert the Bear" (Holt-Rinehart Reading Series) tells about Bert's berry patch

being invaded by a fox. Bert forces him out, in spite of the fox's warning that "he'll be sorry." With the fox gone, Bert's berries are quickly eaten by rabbits. Bert calls back the fox who controls the rabbits and so comes to share the patch with the bear.

5. *Globalizing the study*: Many texts now conclude with a section on global concerns. Sometimes there is the feeling that these were tacked on for purposes of visibility. You can add greater meaning to these lessons by leading directly from studies of specific environmental or community issues into their world-wide implications. There are some conflicts facing the human family that simply cannot be resolved except on the global level. Some samples from social studies texts:

   a. *Cities* (SRA) has a section entitled "Wanted: A Clean World." This combines learning about communities and environmental issues to create a globe-wide focus.

   b. The last chapter of *One Plus One* (Macmillan) raises the question, "Do you think there is such a thing as a world community?" You can add such questions as:

      (1) What kinds of problems does the human family face?

      (2) In what ways are the world's people working together to solve problems?

      (3) Can the students think of other things people could do?

   c. *Groups and Communities* (Noble and Noble) also combines environmental and community themes. The text states: "Only one community is big enough to solve these (environmental) problems. That is the community of the whole world."

For a more thorough and student-involving unit on the Spaceship Earth theme, see Exemplary Lessons, Primary Grades.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

CONFLICT

UPPER ELEMENTARY GRADES (4-6)

OBJECTIVES

Students should

1. understand reasons for conflict within and between national groups.
2. be able to evaluate a variety of ways of resolving conflicts in different settings.
3. be able to recognize cultural differences as an underlying reason for some conflicts.
4. prefer nonviolent solutions to conflict situations.
5. understand ways in which environmental problems involve all the world's people.
6. understand relationships between cultural change and conflict.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The most common subjects in upper elementary social studies are state and national histories, and the study of culture or of other cultures. Whichever subject you are dealing with, and no matter what text you are using, you will find some key places where much can be gained by focusing on the concept of conflict. Other areas for treatment will be found in language arts and science. Read through the outline and select those topics that fit most readily into your teaching plans.

One other point to keep in mind: Don't be misled by the fact that this guide focuses on conflict. We're not suggesting that this should become the central theme of your teaching. Instead, our goals

are to: (1) point out some of the areas where the class will encounter conflict; and (2) suggest ways of using those examples to gain a better understanding of both the subject matter and the concept, and to develop a healthier attitude toward conflict.

TOPIC AND IDEA OUTLINE

INTRODUCTORY -- Identifying conflicts

(Any grade level; a useful introduction to any of the topics in the outline.)

1. What is conflict?

   a. You might begin by finding out what the class already knows about the word. Students will probably be able to give better examples than definitions. Write examples on the board; see what kind of definition they can build from these.

   b. Read, or write on the board, a few sentences, most dealing with different kinds of conflict. Ask the students to identify:

      - what the conflict is.

      - who is involved.

      - how it might end.

      Examples:

      (1) Sam really got angry at that remark. He was ready to punch the kid.

      (2) The tiger crept closer. The rabbit still sensed no danger.

      (3) Audrey stared at the test paper. She couldn't decide which topic to take.

      (4) A huge crowd marched on the nation's capitol. Police called it a large but orderly protest.

(5) The meeting ended with no vote being taken. Spruce Street would wait another week for its traffic light.

(6) The family enjoyed the picnic. It was a fine 4th of July.

(7) The two armies faced each other across the marsh. Weapons glistened in the sun.

c. Discuss the sample sentences. Are conflicts always about the same thing? Who has conflicts? (everyone) Can you have a conflict without other people? (the test) Does someone always get hurt? Do animals have conflicts? How are the conflicts expressed -- that is, what action is there? (anger, punching, creeping, staring, etc.)

(1) This brief discussion can be used for writing on the board: Things We Know About Conflict. The list can be added to in later lessons.

(2) Challenge the students to draw pictures showing *other* examples of conflict. This would be a good activity for working in pairs.

2. *Conflict in stories.*

Children can apply a simple framework of questions to fiction as a way of analyzing the story and understanding a little more about the varieties of conflict. In an individual or class reading assignment, have the students apply the following questions:

a. Who has the problem? Are there two sides to this problem? What is the main conflict about?

b. How does the character try to resolve the conflict? Does this make things better or worse?

c. What else was tried? With what results?

d. How does the reader like the ending? Would another ending be better?

e. Can you think of other problems like the one in the story? Name one.

STUDYING CULTURE OR OTHER CULTURES

Your study of culture -- or non-American societies -- touches on some important areas of conflict. Two of the most likely topics are: (1) the misjudging of cultural differences; and (2) the upheavals created by cultural change. Dealing with such topics with a focus on conflict will help achieve the following objectives:

Students will

- define and give examples of *ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice.*
- recognize how ethnocentrism and prejudice can create conflict.
- understand that accepting cultural differences can reduce conflict.
- give examples of how cultural change can lead to conflict.
- state different ways of dealing with conflicts arising from change.
- identify problems created by modern urbanization.
- feel greater empathy for people caught up in the problems of change.
- adopt a positive attitude towards seeking ways to resolve conflicts.

1. *Misunderstanding others.*

   a. Combine language arts and social studies: In social studies text coverage of other cultures, you are likely to find a spot where mention is made of the need to accept cultural differences. Many texts deal directly with ethnocentrism, stereotyping or prejudice.

      (1) When you reach that point, it might be good to switch to a story for greater depth and reader identification. Use a story which deals with someone whose conflict is a result of being misunderstood or prejudged. Example: A boy from the future (*Riders on the Earth*, Holt Language

Arts Series, 1973) is hated in the community in the present he comes to because people misinterpret his actions. He resolves the situation by returning to the future.

(2) Challenge students to find other examples of someone who was misjudged because their way of life was different. Can they find examples of someone escaping by returning to traditional ways?

b. Return to social studies text for treatment of *ethnocentrism, stereotyping* or *prejudice*.

(1) Have students find dictionary definitions of the three terms.

(2) Apply these to previous stories or to text.

(3) Explain ethnocentrism as natural and normal. Charlie Brown ("Peanuts"), for example, captains a baseball team that has never won a game. But he loves the team and keeps trying.

(a) Ask the class about groups they belong to or support. What happens if someone criticizes the group?

(b) How can ethnocentrism lead to trouble?

(c) How can stereotyping lead to trouble? Why is it wrong to prejudge a person or group?

c. Find examples or case studies in text.

(1) Example: *People and Culture* (Noble and Noble) gives a 19th-century Englishman's account of travels in Africa. He tells of his difficulties in explaining to a young princess why he doesn't want her to smoke his pipe. How does the great difference in cultures make stereotyping easy? (It is often difficult to understand or explain why things are done a certain way.)

(2) Imagine a person from a far different culture coming to the United States.

(a) *How People Live* (Houghton Mifflin, 1976) has a long and appealing account of this type.

(b) Ask the class to write stories about what a visitor (from a culture they are studying) might find strange about American ways of doing things.

(c) Others might write a story about how they would explain the culture they are studying if someone said the people were stupid or backward.

(d) *Activity*: Invite a foreign exchange student (high school or college) to talk to the class about "My first week in the United States."

2. *Cultural change and conflict.*

Background -- Many texts deal with the theme of the problems that arise when cultures change -- especially the change of traditional cultures under the impact of modern technology. (In fact, this is the central theme of the level 6 text in the Taba Series, *People in Change*.) You might be dealing with dramatic changes in ways of living experienced by the Eskimo or the American Indian, or it might be an entire nation such as Nigeria, Brazil or Mexico. All of these groups have something in common -- a conflict between traditional patterns and modern life. By using conflict as a lens, students will gain a better understanding of what culture change means.

a. Change creates problems. Example: the Eskimo. A framework of questions can be applied to just about any case study:

(1) What new things have changed the Eskimo way of life?

(2) In what ways has survival become less of a struggle?

(3) What other good things have come with change?

(4) What problems have come with change? (end of whaling; decline of hunting and trapping; need to search for jobs, etc.)

(5) What do the Eskimos miss?

(6) What solutions have been tried?

b. Talking it over:

(1) Does the class think it is possible to become modern and still maintain traditional ways? How could this be done?

(2) What are some groups that face similar problems?

(3) *Inquiring About Culture* (Holt Databank, Level 4) tells of a young Indian girl whose family moves from their New Mexico reservation to Chicago. They then decide to go back to New Mexico. What would the students do in the same position? Why?

(4) Do other Americans face the same kind of problem?

- Do we sometimes wish we could go back in time or return to the "good old days?"

- You might explore such things as handcraft industries; the restoration of historic sites or towns; having county fairs. This is how we try to keep traditional ways while living in a changing world.

c. *Activity*: Role-play text or story situations -- or write letters to friends who have stayed with old ways. The letters should tell about good things that come with change as well as problems. Note that there are often no perfect solutions to these kinds of conflicts. People adjust as best they can.

d. *Television*: Check scheduling for programs like those put on by *National Geographic*, which might deal with ways a culture is changing. Have the class view the program and make lists of the desirable results of change and the problems.

e. Exploring the local community.

(1) Have students interview their parents or grandparents about things in America's past that they wish we still had (ice cream parlors, horse-and-carriages, more circuses, etc.) Can they find traditions at home (foods, celebrations, etc.) that have been kept even though so much has changed?

(2) *How People Live* (Houghton Mifflin, Level 6) suggests having students interview people who face problems because of new inventions or machines.

- How is a neighborhood changed by a new building project?

- Who likes the changes and why?

- Who faces a new problem because of the change?

- What can be done about the problem?

f. Cycles of change: Your text or stories may provide examples of culture changes that create a sort of cycle of problems, solutions, and more change. Such cases can be useful in helping the class recognize that many conflicts are difficult to solve, and some solutions lead to new problems. Example: A long unit on the people of the Cumberland (*Inquiring About Cultures*, Holt Databank, Level 4) who have experienced a series of conflict-change patterns (selling forests to lumber companies and then being devastated by floods; turning to coal mining and experiencing more environmental mayhem as well as the despair of the Great Depression; efforts of the government to help, etc.). The unit ends with the statement: "They hoped, and still hope, that a new day would come to their land."

g. The need for cultural change.

(1) Many texts emphasize the need of societies to modernize more rapidly. *Regions of the World* (SRA, Level 6), for example, lists a series of problems Latin American nations must solve in order to develop modern economies. More typically, texts will include statements like "Nigeria today needs more industry." (*People and the Land*, Noble and Noble)

(2) You can explore these conclusions more realistically. Some sample questions to consider:

(a) Why can't Nigerians -- or others -- continue living in traditional ways? Why do they *need* more industry?

(b) What difficulties stand in the way of change? Why can't societies have all the industry they want?

(c) What will happen if *all* the world's countries develop modern industries? What problems does industry create?

3. *Moving to cities -- the impact of urbanization.*

This is related to the topic of cultural change. The rapid growth of cities, of course, is a global phenomenon -- the world's people are becoming city dwellers. This pattern leads to two large problem areas: (1) adjusting to city life; and (2) trying to make cities liveable.

a. Adjusting to city life: A good approach is to deal with the new roles and new ways of doing things in cities.

(1) Why do so many people move to cities? If only one other society is being studied, compare movement to cities with the United States. Make a list of reasons for moving to cities.

(2) What new things do people have to learn for city life? What new roles are needed?

(3) Why are new ways difficult to learn? What do people miss about the old ways?

(4) *Activity*: Divide the class into two groups. Have one make a mural of city roles in a society being studied; the other group can make a mural of country or village roles. Use photographs if available, or draw the pictures.

(5) What do people like about the city? How do they adjust to new ways? Do they:

- get used to the city and like it?

- stay but feel unhappy?

- decide to go back?

Focus on identifiable families, either in the text or in stories. Example: *The World of Mankind* (Follett) contains a detailed account of a Chicano family moving to the city. Many problems seem small ("At a certain minute he had to begin work."), but in combination these can make adjustment difficult. Why might such changes create a conflict?

(6) *Writing activities*: Suppose the students were moving to a city in Uganda or India. How is this like moving

to a city in the United States? Write a report on similarities and differences. Or, write -- and act out -- a playlet on moving to the city.

b. The problems of cities.

(1) The basic questions to deal with are:

- What problems do cities face?
- What are some causes of these problems?
- How are people trying to solve them?
- How are governments involved? That is, what are some specific things governments are doing?

(2) Make sure the students understand that the problems are difficult and complex; there are few final solutions. (Avoid oversimplifications, such as: if everyone cooperates, the problems will be solved; or, as governments do more, cities are improving.) Example: *Inquiring About Cultures* (Holt Databank, Level 4) has a long case study of changing city life in Lagos, capital of Nigeria. Government efforts to improve conditions led to an upsetting of traditional patterns. The text asks: "Can you explain why people might not want to leave old, dark, dirty homes in a big city for modern new homes in the suburbs?" Look for -- or develop -- similar cases in your text. You may want to have your class examine a number of problems using the following as a retrieval chart:

Type of Problem

What are people doing about it?
What is the government doing?
Do all the solutions work?
What new problems come from solutions?
What can be done about these?

(3) Explore the local community -- choose a specific problem (crime, traffic, housing, etc.). Have volunteers make a bulletin board display of recent newspaper clippings dealing with the problem. In discussion, focus on the question: Why is there conflict about how the problem should be solved?

STUDYING AMERICAN HISTORY

American history texts are generally problem-oriented. A number of familiar conflicts form central themes: relations between settlers and Indians; the American Revolution; slavery and the Civil War; the struggle for equal rights; the problems of labor. By focusing on the conflict aspects of these events, the class will see important relationships between them. Performance objectives:

Students will

- identify patterns of conflict in at least three historical events.
- give examples of ways in which both values and needs can be involved in an issue.
- evaluate various efforts to resolve problems.
- understand why some conflicts continue over long periods.
- feel empathy for those involved in serious conflict situations.
- compare violent and nonviolent means of resolving conflicts.

1. *Analyzing conflicts in American history.*

Try the following technique with at least three major events over the course of the year: Have the students work in pairs or small groups. Armed with a set of questions, they can work together to find answers. Once they have analyzed two or three events in this manner, they will begin to see more clearly how conflict operates in the life of any society or group.

a. Questions to apply to course materials:

- What is the conflict about?

- Who is involved?
- What values or beliefs are involved?
- How are wants or basic needs involved?
- What solutions are tried and fail?
- How does the conflict end?
- What else could have been tried?

b. The answers the students find can be put on a retrieval chart. A sample might look like this: (see page 13)

Some basic conflicts in American history have persisted over long periods; some continue today. You might want to have the students work with the same conflict chart at appropriate times over the year. Thus, this sample chart would be used in studying the colonial period, the westward movement, the late 19th century, and current struggles for equal rights. In this way, the concept will form an organizing theme; at the same time, students will be better able to state why the issue remains unresolved.

2. *Understanding different points of view in conflicts in American history.*

Teachers can use a variety of techniques to help children see that people may hold different points of view in a conflict. These include:

a. *Role-playing conflicts.* This is a valuable exercise for adding depth and meaning to course materials; it is also good for non-threatening experience with conflict.

(1) Some sample role-playing situations:

- An Indian talks with a white friend about why he has decided on war against settlers.
- The delegates to the Constitutional Convention must decide how states will be represented in the new Congress.

Event: Taking of Indian Lands	Side 1: Settlers	Side 2: Indians
This conflict is about:	Taking land.	Protecting land.
The sides are:	Settlers.	Indians.
Values or beliefs are:	1. Indians don't know what to do with the land. 2. Indians are savages; they're like children. 3. White people are better, stronger. 4. The 2 groups can't live side by side.	1. The land has always been used by our people. 2. No one owns; all can share. 3. White people are cruel.
Wants and needs are:	1. More people are coming, so more land is needed. 2. People want land; land is wealth. 3. Some people want religious freedom; others want a new start.	1. Survival -- we need hunting grounds. 2. We want to be free to roam where we please.
Solutions that didn't work:	1. Signing treaties. 2. War (might say this worked).	1. Adopting white ways. 2. War.
The conflict ends when:	1. Indians are forced West (or, later, onto reservations).	1. Indians surrender. 2. But many continue to struggle for equal rights and opportunity.
Other things they could have tried:	The settlers could have had more respect for the Indians and their culture. Treaties should have been respected. More and better land could have been granted to the Indians.	

- Abraham Lincoln debates with his cabinet on whether to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

- A group of workers face a factory owner to ask for better wages.

- A committee of Congress meets with a women's group on the issue of women's suffrage.

- A black family, seeking a suburban home, confronts an uncooperative real estate broker.

(2) Talking it over:

- How did it *feel* to be on either side?

- Were both parties convinced that they were right?

- What values or beliefs were mentioned?

- How were wants and basic needs involved?

- What choices were there for resolving the problem?

  Which was chosen?

  Do you think this was the best choice?

b. *Stories, films and television programs.*

Use these for further understanding of the feelings involved. Can the class think of other conflicts that seemed similar (not necessarily in American history)? How do you think you would feel if you were _____? Why do you think (in a specific situation) the people turned to violence? Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not? Do you think nonviolent solutions would have worked as well or better? Why or why not?

c. ***Art.***

Have students try illustrating viewpoints in conflict situations. Some examples:

- Indian attitudes toward nature, compared with those of white settlers.

- Images of slavery.

- The need to create a strong and unified government for the new nation of the United States.

- Two brothers confront each other as enemies in the Civil War.

3. *The role of government in resolving conflict.*

Our governmental institutions provide numerous ways of regulating conflict and allowing for its expression and resolution. Choose a few cases during the year to illustrate this function of government. Here are a few examples:

a. The Constitutional Convention: What was the conflict between the large states and the small states? How was it resolved? (A *compromise*; and the compromise was agreed to by *voting*.) Can the class think of other conflicts that were resolved either by compromise or voting?

b. The slavery issue: How was the problem handled before the Civil War? *Windows on Our World: The United States* (Houghton Mifflin Series, 1976) has the students analyze compromises, the forming of new political parties, debates and elections.

c. The industrial revolution -- workers and employers: How could the workers try to deal with their problems? (form unions, strike, etc.) What could employers do? (lockouts, black lists) How did the government become involved? (First on the side of owners; then recognized unions, passed laws on working conditions, etc.)

d. Can government solve all of a society's problems? Emphasize that government provides *one* means of dealing with conflicts. Solutions are often difficult to work out.

STUDYING THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental studies offer excellent opportunities for showing relationships among subject areas, particularly social studies, language arts, science, and art. All can be utilized to create a multidisci-

plinary unit or series of units. Aspects of the study which focus on concepts will achieve such objectives as:

Students will

- give examples of ways in which plants and animals compete over basic needs.
- recognize that humans can "manage" nature but must be careful not to misuse their power.
- know that environmental conflicts often involve values and beliefs.
- understand that, because we live in an interdependent world, problems in environmental systems can affect all living things.
- recognize that solutions to environmental problems sometimes create new problems.

1. Studying conflict in nature.

(Science classes)

a. Use the idea of *competitors* to bring out ideas about conflict. Some questions to explore:

(1) In dealing with specific examples, what are they competing over? What basic needs are involved besides food?

(2) In what ways is this competition like cases of conflict the class has learned about?

(3) How do humans compete with other animals? Does this conflict ever end?

(4) The SCIS unit on *Communities* (Science Curriculum Improvement Study, Rand McNally, Level 5, 1971) raises such questions as:

- "What might happen if man eliminated all the birds that eat wheat, corn, berries, and nuts?"
- "What might happen if man eliminated all populations that eat the same animals he does?" In other

words, should humans try to eliminate their competitors? What might happen if they did?

b. The study of *ecosystems* also involves important aspects of conflict.

(1) What happens when humans change an ecosystem? Can the results always be predicted? Can the change lead to conflict? Example: (Adapted from *Science: Understanding Your Environment*, Level 4, Silver Burdett, 1975) The prickly pear cactus is a weed. Cattle eat it. The plant was introduced in Australia to provide much needed cattle feed. What will happen? (Invite guesses.) What did happen? The prickly pear grew so well that it filled the fields to the point where cattle couldn't get through. How could this problem be solved? (The solution came with the discovery that caterpillars of the prickly-pear moth had a hearty appetite for the cactus.)

(2) Building an ecosystem: A 6th grade program (*Modular Activities Program in Science*, Houghton Mifflin, 1974) suggests combining this activity with planning a space trip. In this way, students can "relate the ecosystem concept to themselves and the world" and understand "the global concept of the earth as a spaceship." The "inner-spaceship" is a closed system created in a jar. Some questions to consider about the "inner-spaceship":

- What are the resources of your ecosystem? Which do you think will be most in demand?

- What conflicts among the organisms do you predict? What will the conflicts be over?

- What form will the conflicts take? Which organisms may die?

After the experiment:

- What is still alive at the end of the experiment?

- What happens when an ecosystem is not balanced? Is this a problem for the whole system or just parts?

These same questions can be applied to the imaginary space trip. Point out that the same questions can be used. What can the students infer from this?

c. Environmental systems and conflict.

(Science or social studies classes)

(1) Help the students see the relationships between *systems* and conflict. A conflict involving a system involves all parts of that system.

(2) Example: When the class studies the earth's water system, show how a problem in one part can affect the others. Sample questions (from *Planet Earth*, Houghton Mifflin Social Studies Series, Level 4, 1976): "How did the pollution (DDT) get from the farmland to the lake? What laws would *you* make about DDT? If DDT is *not* used, what might happen to people and food crops? If DDT *is* used, what might happen to living things?"

2. Protecting the environment.

(Science, social studies, language arts, art)

A sampling of activities and approaches:

a. Have the class make bulletin board displays or murals showing:

(1) different kinds of pollution, including noise.

(2) pollution in different parts of the world. Talk about:

- How do the pictures show conflict between humans and other living things?

- Is there a conflict over the *need* to protect the environment and the *need* to produce things for consumption? Is a compromise possible?

- What kinds of conflict are there over how to protect the environment?

b. Relate local issues to global concerns. Ask students to bring in newspaper clippings about environmental issues. Post these.

Discuss such questions as:

- What is the problem? Why is there conflict over what should be done?

- Suppose expensive anti-pollution devices are needed. What conflicts will this cause? Who will be involved? How can the matter be resolved?

- How is this issue like those involving the entire earth?

Examination of real issues will help children accept a kind of ambiguity. The problems are complex and difficult. Solutions require difficult choices.

c. Ask volunteers to prepare reports on conflicts over such things as pesticides, detergents, aerosols. In art classes, have children prepare posters on what they think should be done about specific problems.

d. Stress the possibilities for change. No matter what kind of environmental problem you are dealing with, points of emphasis should be:

(1) What are people doing?

(2) What can we do?

(3) What more needs to be done?

Use case studies of positive action. The social studies texts offer some -- for example, the Willamette story in *Windows on Our World: The United States* (Houghton Mifflin, Level 5, 1976).

e. Invite a member of a conservationist group (Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth, etc.) to talk about what can be done. Also invite a member of local government responsible for environmental protection. Ask the person to talk about: (1) what is being done about a specific problem; (2) what conflicts are encountered; and (3) how these conflicts might be resolved.

f. Literature: There are a number of good children's books on environmental concerns. See, for example, the verse

series called Freedom Books (Bowmar, 1970). Such readings can be used to illustrate such ideas as:

- the different ways people express their concerns.

- the thorny problem of separating fact from opinion.

3. Explorin Spaceship Earth themes.

   a. Space stories can be used to draw out the idea of earth as a spaceship. Example: A story dealing with colonizing another planet. Some questions to talk about:

      - What are the properties of the planet? What needs can be supplied from its resources?

      - What needs will have to be supplied by earth's resources? How can this be done? (This will lead to a discussion of such factors as the need to recycle water.)

      - What conflicts might arise? What ways could you suggest to resolve these problems?

      - Would a settlement on another planet be like our Western frontier? Why or why not?

   b. Many social studies texts now conclude with a unit that touches on some of the larger issues facing the world's people -- often using Spaceship Earth language. Rather than oversimplify the treatment (and create the idea that solutions are equally simple), it might be best to choose one such issue and relate it to previous course work. Protecting the environment, then, might be more a natural choice than something like strengthening the UN or easing population pressure. To emphasize the complexity of the issue, have the class consider:

      - What conflicts the problem creates. How do people differ in their view of the problem?

      - Suppose a change is tried to create a healthier environment. Could this change (like banning pesticides) create new problems?